

New lease of life for 'get tested' message

A pilot project in Victoria aims to increase rates of vision testing in the community by improving patient and health practitioner knowledge, and promoting referral pathways encouraging those at risk or with eye symptoms to see their optometrist.

Essential to the project will be the education of health practitioners, including GPs and pharmacists, who will be provided with information and materials to ensure that those in need of an eye exam are identified and referred for care.

Roman Serebrianik (PICTURED), Lead Optometrist Primary Care at the Australian College of Optometry will be one of many Victorian optometrists supporting the pilot, which is initially being conducted in four local government areas around Victoria:

Darebin; Geelong; Greater Shepparton; and the La Trobe Valley. Roman will present two webinars for pharmacists, highlighting how in say-to-day practice, they can help their patients with or at risk of eye problems by asking simple prompt questions or knowing when to refer based on symptoms or patient need. Other local optometrists have put their hands up to support the pilot by participating in media interviews and providing case studies.

The project has received funding via the Victorian government, through the Vision Initiative, a program run by Vision 2020 Australia and specifically



focused on raising eye health awareness in Victoria. It is hoped the pilot, in which health practitioners will be invited to participate and undertake activities including tracking referrals, will boost eye testing in the local government areas identified. If

successful, the pilot materials and messages could be made more widely available across Victoria.

Optometrists practising in those four local government areas who would like to know more can contact Dee Tumino at Vision 2020 on (03) 9656 2020, or by email dtumino@vision2020australia.org.au